

Nothing delighted these natives more than to play practical jokes upon each other. A horse would be missing from the owner's stable, although the door was doubly secured by bolt and lock, and he would spend perhaps days in scouring the country to find the lost animal; and after the fruitless search was abandoned, it would be found secreted, or put to use by a mischievous neighbor. Hardwick was not slow to enter into these so-called amusements with spirit; but it is a memorable fact, that they never were of more serious consequence than a fisticuff, or a laugh at the expense of the victim. The days of revolvers and *knuckles* had not yet arrived.

The very gratifying enjoyment of playing a trick was one indulged in by Hardwick in this wise: He was employed to carry the mail on the route between Green Bay and Milwaukee, when established in 1833. It was customary for the French people to turn their ponies loose in the spring, and allow them to roam at will during the summer months. Hardwick started out with the mail on his back to make his weekly trip, and returned in the same manner, making good time, and never failing in the regularity of his arrival at the appointed time. There was much astonishment expressed, that he had never failed during the season, and always came in at the hour, fresh and free from fatigue.

In the fall of the year, when the owners began to gather in their animals for winter use, one of them discovered that his best horse, instead of profiting by the summer vacation of rest and abundant feed, had become worn down by continued and severe work. It took not long to discover, as was the fact, that Hardwick's weekly trips had been made easily by the use of this jaded animal. He had been pressed into service so continually that he was reduced to a mere skeleton. The owner applied to one of the Green Bay lawyers, who advised him to go before the grand jury at the next term of court, and enter complaint against the offender for *stealing* his horse, and Hardwick was accordingly indicted for the offense. It is quite unnecessary to add, that his honor, the judge, did not agree with the jury in finding a charge of *larceny*, and the defendant escaped punishment for his free use of his neighbor's property. This occurrence was but one of the many